

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Original) A method of controlling call admission within a system comprising a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the method comprising the steps of:

at least one media gateway, monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to that gateway from other media gateways or groups of media gateways over said backbone; and

following receipt of a request for said at least one media gateway to terminate a bearer extending over said backbone from a "peer" media gateway, making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by incoming packets from that peer media gateway or a group of media gateways containing the peer gateway.

2. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method according to claim 1, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to a gateway one of a plurality of media gateways comprises

examining packets received at that gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

3. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to the one of a plurality of media gateways a gateway further comprising

monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped.

4. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] method according to claim 3 ~~when appended to claim 2~~, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by

incoming packets to ~~a gateway~~ the one of a plurality of media gateways further comprising

monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped by the backbone and

examining packets received at the one of a plurality of media gateways that gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

5. (Currently Amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ method according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the step of monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to the one of a plurality of media gateways ~~a gateway~~ comprises associating incoming packets or packet sequences with an originating gateway based upon source addresses or parts of source addresses.

6. (Currently Amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ method according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein said packet switched backbone is an Internet Protocol (IP) backbone.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ method according to claim 1 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein said step of making a decision on the admissibility of a request for a media gateway to terminate a bearer, further comprises making the ~~that~~ decision at the media gateway.

8. (Currently Amended) The ~~[[A]]~~ method according to claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~, wherein the decision on the admissibility of a request for a media gateway to terminate a bearer is made at the media gateway controller controlling said at least one media gateway, and monitored congestion levels are signalled to the media gateway controller by the media gateway.

9. (Original) A media gateway arranged to control call admission within a system comprising a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the media gateway comprising:

means for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to that gateway from other media gateways or groups of media gateways over said backbone;

means for receiving a request for that media gateway to terminate a bearer extending over said backbone from a “peer” media gateway; and

means coupled to the monitoring means and the receiving means for making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by incoming packets from that peer media gateway or a group of media gateways containing the peer gateway.

10. (Currently Amended) A media gateway controller arranged to control call admission within a system comprising a plurality of media gateways interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the media gateway controller comprising:

an interface towards at least one media gateway;

means for receiving monitored congestion levels from ~~the or~~ each media gateway to which ~~[[it]]~~ the media gateway controller has an interface, the monitored congestion levels being indicative of the congestion suffered by incoming packets to the ~~[[or]]~~ respective gateways from other media gateways or groups of media gateways over said backbone;

means for receiving a call request requiring that a media gateway terminate a bearer extending over said backbone from a “peer” media gateway; and

means coupled to both the receiving means for making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the congestion level suffered by incoming packets from that peer media gateway or a group of media gateways containing the peer gateway.

11. Canceled

12. Canceled

13. (New) A computer program product within a computer usable medium for controlling call admission within a system comprising a plurality of media gateways

interconnected by a packet switched backbone, the computer program comprising instructions within the computer usable medium for:

monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to at least one media gateway from other media gateways or groups of media gateways over said backbone; and

following receipt of a request for said at least one media gateway to terminate a bearer extending over said backbone from a "peer" media gateway, making a decision on the admissibility of that request based upon the previously monitored level of congestion suffered by incoming packets from that peer media gateway or a group of media gateways containing the peer gateway.

14. (New) The computer program product according to claim 1, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to one of a plurality of media gateways comprises

examining packets received at that gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

15. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to the one of a plurality of media gateways further comprise

monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped.

16. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to the one of a plurality of media gateways further comprise

monitoring the rate at which packets are dropped by the backbone and

examining packets received at the one of a plurality of media gateways that gateway to determine whether or not they contain a congestion notification flag.

17. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein the instructions for monitoring the level of congestion suffered by incoming packets to the one of a plurality of media gateways comprises

associating incoming packets or packet sequences with an originating gateway based upon source addresses or parts of source addresses.

18. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein said packet switched backbone is an Internet Protocol (IP) backbone.

19. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein said instructions for making a decision on the admissibility of a request for a media gateway to terminate a bearer, further comprises making the decision at the media gateway.

20. (New) The computer program product according to claim 13, wherein instructions for the decision on the admissibility of a request for a media gateway to terminate a bearer is made at the media gateway controller controlling said at least one media gateway, and monitored congestion levels are signaled to the media gateway controller by the media gateway.